

CLAIMS

1. A method of measuring the partition coefficient of a compound between two immiscible solvents, said method comprising the steps of:
- 5 a) providing a composition which contains said compound and comprises nanoparticles having a porous surface and a first solvent, wherein a second solvent is absorbed into the pores of the nanoparticles and wherein said first and second solvents are immiscible;
- 10 b) separating the product of step a) into two components, the first comprising the nanoparticles and the second comprising the solvent; and
- 15 c) determining the partition coefficient from the partition of the compound between said first and second components.
2. A composition comprising nanoparticles having a porous surface and a first solvent, wherein a second solvent is absorbed into the pores of the nanoparticles and wherein said first and second solvents are immiscible.
- 20 3. A composition according to claim 2 wherein said nanoparticles form a colloidally stable suspension in said first solvent.
4. A composition according to claim 2 or 3 wherein said porous surface is formed of any one of silica, alumina, titania, zirconia or carbon.
- 25 5. A composition according to any one of claims 2 to 4 wherein the nanoparticles further comprise a magnetic material core.
- 30 6. A composition according to claim 5 wherein said magnetic material core is formed from magnetite (Fe_3O_4), maghemite ($\gamma\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$), greigite (Fe_3S_4), Fe_2CoO_4 , a ferromagnetic metal or alloy or carbide.
- 35 7. A composition according to any one of claims 2 to 6 wherein said nanoparticles have a diameter of between 2nm and $1\mu\text{m}$.

8. A composition according to any one of claims 2 to 7 wherein the porous surface layer of said nanoparticles has a thickness of between 1nm and 100nm.
9. A composition according to any one of claims 2 to 8
5 wherein said first solvent is aqueous, particularly is water.
10. A composition according to any one of claims 2 to 9 wherein said second solvent is one of n-octanol, cyclohexane, a C₆ - C₁₀ alkane, chloroform, propylene glycol dipelargonate (PGDP), 1,2-dichloroethane, olive oil, benzene, toluene,
10 nitrobenzene, chlorobenzene, tetrachloromethane, oleyl alcohol, 4-methylpentan-2-ol, pentan-1-ol, pentan-2-ol, isobutanol, butan-1-ol, 2-methylbutan-2-ol, butan-2-ol, butan-2-one, diethyl ether, isoamyl acetate, ethyl acetate, etc. or a monophasic mixture of two or more of these.
- 15 11. A composition according to any one of claims 2 to 10 wherein the volume ratio of said first solvent to said second solvent is between 3000:1 and 1:1 (preferably in the range 500:1 to 50:1).
12. A composition according to claim 11 wherein the ratio of
20 said first solvent to said second solvent is at least 100:1.
13. A method of attaining partition of a compound between two immiscible solvents comprising incorporating said compound in a composition according to any one of claims 2 to 12.
14. A composition for use in a quantitative analytical
25 technique, comprising nanoparticles each having a porous surface and a solvent adsorbed in the pores of the nanoparticles in a predetermined amount per unit weight of the composition.
15. A composition according to claim 13, wherein said porous
30 surface is formed from any one of silica, alumina, titania, zirconia or carbon.
16. A composition according to claim 14 or 15 wherein the nanoparticles each have a magnetic material core.
17. A composition according to any one of claims 14 to 16
35 wherein said solvent is immiscible with water.
18. A composition according to claim 17 wherein said second solvent is one of n-octanol, cyclohexane, a C₆ - C₁₀ alkane,

- chloroform, propylene glycol dipelargonate (PGDP), 1,2-dichloroethane, olive oil, benzene, toluene, nitrobenzene, chlorobenzene, tetrachloromethane, oleyl alcohol, 4-methylpentan-2-ol, pentan-1-ol, pentan-2-ol, isobutanol, butan-1-ol, 2-methylbutan-2-ol, butan-2-ol, butan-2-one, diethyl ether, isoamyl acetate, ethyl acetate, etc. or a monophasic mixture of two or more of these.
19. Use of a composition according to any one of claims 14 to 18 in a method of determining a partition coefficient.
- 10 20. A method of measuring the partition coefficient of a compound between two immiscible solvents, said method comprising the steps of:
- a) incorporating said compound in a composition according to any one of claims 2 to 13;
 - 15 b) separating the product of step a) into two components, the first comprising the nanoparticles and the second comprising the first solvent; and
 - c) determining the partition coefficient from the partition of the compound between said first and second components.
- 20 21. A method according to claim 1 or 20 wherein step c) comprises determining the amount of said compound which remains in said first solvent.
22. A method according to claim 1, 20 or 21 wherein said compound is a bioactive drug molecule.
- 25 23. A method according to any one of claims 1 and 20 to 22 wherein step b) is performed by any one of filtration, centrifugation and magnetic separation.
24. A method according to any one of claims 1 and 20 to 23 wherein step c) comprises recording the UV-visible spectrum of said supernatant solution.
- 30 25. A method according to any one of claims 1 and 20 to 24 further comprising shaking the composition of step a) prior to performing the separation step b).
- 35 26. A nanoparticle having a core comprising a catalytically active species, and a porous layer surrounding the core which

has a pore size such that the catalytically active species is entrapped.

27. A nanoparticle according to claim 26 wherein said core catalytically active species is a biologically active species, e.g. an enzyme or other protein.

28. A nanoparticle according to claim 27 wherein said biologically active species is any one of blood serum albumin, β -Lactamase I (Penicillinase), kinase, a carboxylesterase, metallothionin, cytochrome b, c, P450, etc.

29. A nanoparticle according to any one of claims 26 to 28 wherein said porous layer is formed from any one of silica, alumina, titania, zirconia or carbon.

30. A nanoparticle according to any one of claims 26 to 29 wherein said core further comprises a magnetic material.

31. A nanoparticle according to claim 30 wherein said magnetic core is formed from magnetite (Fe_3O_4), maghemite ($\gamma\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$), greigite (Fe_3S_4) or Fe_2CoO_4 or ferromagnetic metal or alloys (such as Fe-Pt, Fe-Co, Fe-Ni), metal carbides, etc.

32. A nanoparticle according to any one of claims 26 to 31 wherein said nanoparticles have an average a diameter of between 2nm and 1 μm .

33. A nanoparticle according to any one of claims 26 to 32 wherein the core of the nanoparticle has an average diameter of between 1 and 10 nm.

34. A nanoparticle according to any one of claims 26 to 33 wherein the porous outer coating on said nanoparticle has a thickness between 1nm and 100nm.

35. An assembly of nanoparticles at least some of which are nanoparticles according to any one of claims 26 to 34, wherein on average the number of molecules of said catalytically active species per nanoparticle of the assembly is not more than one.

36. A method of making a nanoparticle according to any one of claims 26 to 34, comprising the following steps:

a) forming, in a liquid medium, colloidal particles containing the catalytically active species to be contained in

the nanoparticle core, the particles being colloiddally stabilised by a surfactant;

b) treating said colloiddal particles by hydrolysis or pyrolysis to form the porous layer surrounding the catalytically active species.

37. A method of claim 36 wherein, in step a), said colloiddal particles further contain a magnetic material or a precursor to a magnetic material.

38. A method of claim 36 or 37 wherein said colloiddal particles comprise aqueous colloiddal particles in a solvent which is immiscible with water.

39. A method of claim 38 further comprising adding a salt of silicon, aluminium, titanium or zirconium to the product of step a), which forms the corresponding oxide compound upon hydrolysis at the colloid boundary.

40. A method of claim 39 wherein said silicon salt is tetraethyl orthosilicate (TEOS) and the surfactant is cetyltrimethylammonium bromide (CTAB).

41. A method of depositing a component in pores of a porous material, by contacting the porous material with a solution of the component in a supercritical fluid.

42. A method according to claim 41 wherein the supercritical fluid is removed by depressurising it and allowing it to evaporate.

43. A method according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the component is a liquid.

44. A method according to any one of claims 41 to 43 wherein the component is substantially insoluble in water.

45. A method according to any one of claims 41 to 44 wherein the porous material is porous particles.

46. A method according to claim 45 wherein the porous particles are nanoparticles, having a particle size not greater than 1 μ m.

47. A method according to any one of claims 41 to 46 wherein the porous material has a porous silica surface.

48. A method according to any one of claims 41 to 47 wherein the supercritical fluid is carbon dioxide.

49. A method of preparing a composition containing two components comprising preparing porous particles containing a first component in a predetermined amount by a method according to claims 45 to 48, and adding said particles to a liquid second component.
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50. A method according to claim 49 wherein the first and second components are immiscible.